

SCRTA Newsletter



Jim Sparks, President
Nancy Wilhelm, Vice-President
Ione Elliott, Secretary
Kim Sparks, Treasurer

Shelby County Retired Teachers Association
November 2022
Volume 9, Issue 4

November Meeting

Wednesday, November 2

Lake Shelbyville Visitor Center

8:45 a.m. – Snacks/Visiting

9:00 a.m. – Program

followed by Business Meeting
(where we will discuss TRAIL insurance
and the ongoing lawsuit concerning the
state's underfunding of our insurance)

Bring along your favorite beverage and
join us in person or find the meeting link
on our website and join us by Zoom.

November Program

You might be surprised by all
the things that Shelby County
Community Services is
involved in throughout the
county. Cathy Rittenour will
be joining us to talk about it.

Mark Your Calendar 2023 Meeting Dates

March 1
June 6
September 7
November 1

President's Note

Happy Fall to everyone. I hope that this note finds you comfortable and still enjoying some nice weather before the chill of winter arrives. Midterm elections are right around the corner, and I hope that all of you will join me in voting to guide governing officials to represent what we feel is important. It is difficult to trust candidates by what they only say they "plan" on doing. We must be vigilant in the words "by the people, for the people".

Prices at the grocery store and gas station continue to remain high requiring us to be frugal with our retirement to stretch it as best we can. My wife and I enjoy cooking at home for each other and together. Being retired we are not required to drive great distances on a weekly basis. Both of these facts help us save and hope for better days ahead.

Health insurance is on our minds with the state of Illinois deciding to use only an Aetna PPO plan for all of us over 65. While the premium for this plan will be less than what we paid in the past, there are many concerned about the coverage and doctors we will be able to access. Open enrollment meeting dates have been sent out. There are several in-person meetings planned near us. We can also visit <http://cms.illinois.gov/thetrail> for dates, times, and links to participate in virtual webinars or to view pre-recorded live sessions once they are posted.

Finally let me say that I believe we stand strong together. Please feel free to reach out to me or any of our officers should you have any concerns or questions. We are here to serve and represent your interests. Do not forget that we do our best to post important information on our website that you can check into any time at <https://www.shelbycountyretiredteachers.com/>.

James A. Sparks
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SCRTA News



In September Dr. Kyle Thompson, Regional Superintendent for ROE #11, spoke to us about the role the Regional Office plays in our county schools. He spotlighted the Youth Services programs as well as various safety issues. Jane McKown, IRTA Area 5 representative and President of Moultrie County RTA, was with us to talk about opportunities to serve IRTA in different capacities.



We had a good turnout in person, and members also joined the meeting through Zoom.



Remember our website:

<https://www.shelbycountyretiredteachers.com/>

These are some of the school supplies we collected and delivered to all county schools.

Bud and LaVonne visit with Bob and Lana before the meeting.

Also at our June meeting we asked for volunteers to serve on a committee to disseminate the funds from our July Community Day Event at Monical's. At the committee meeting later in September, it was decided to give six \$100 mini grants, one to each of the 6 school districts in Shelby County. An application form was developed and sent to all county principals to distribute to their staffs. Applications have been coming in since then, with our deadline being November 1. We will be asking for volunteers at our November meeting to join the committee in judging the proposals.



Past President Roger Hampton is now serving in the role of Vice President, having been recommended to the position by President Bill Funkhouser and approved by the Executive Committee. Besides the duties of Vice President, Roger also is Chair of the Constitution Committee and the Executive Director Search Committee.

You can stay connected with IRTA in a variety of ways.

Check out the IRTA website – <https://www.irtaonline.org>

Coffee with Jim - Jim Bachman, Executive Director of Illinois Retired Teachers Association, conducts an online video meeting via Zoom each month. Coffee with Jim was built to connect, listen, and share topics for retired educators and retirees in general. The two remaining meetings this year are on November 10 and December 8, both at 9:30 a.m. Here are links to join:

[10 Coffee with the Executive Director/Jim Bachman \(Zoom\) – 9:30 AM](#)

[8 Coffee with the Executive Director/Jim Bachman \(Zoom\) – 9:30 AM](#)

Retired Teachers Endorse Candidates for Illinois General Assembly

(Springfield, Ill. – September 1, 2022) The Illinois Retired Teachers Association Political Action Committee (IRTAPAC) is proud to announce its endorsed candidates, both republicans and democrats, for the November 8, 2022, general election.

“We have carefully vetted the candidates for Illinois House and Illinois Senate, and we are confident that each will make excellent proponents of retired teachers” said Sharon Teefey, Chair of the IRTAPAC. “The lack of an endorsement should not necessarily be viewed as a negative reflection of a particular candidate’s views on retired teachers’ issues in general.”

The deliberation process was based on several factors, including answers to a short questionnaire, voting history, demonstrated support for retirees, support for the rights of retirees under the constitution, member recommendation and staff recommendation. Only candidates who returned a completed questionnaire were evaluated. The recipients who received endorsement were nominated by the members of the IRTA Political Action Committee and then ultimately approved for endorsement by the IRTAPAC Board of Directors.

“Via the questionnaire and in-person discussions we assessed candidates on issues such as the constitution, the current tax code, health insurance, and funding,” IRTAPAC Board Chair, Bill Funkhouser said. “We endorsed candidates who tell us that promises made are promises kept and that they will vote to fully-fund those commitments. No other factors besides the issues relating to retired educators were considered when making these endorsements.”

The IRTAPAC is pleased to report receiving the most returned questionnaires in its history at 110. “We owe a huge thank you to our members and the IRTAPAC committee for staying vigilant and reaching out to their elected officials and candidates, urging them to return their questionnaires,” Teefey added.

The Illinois Retired Teachers Association is a nonpartisan, grassroots political organization. The Association advocates for the interests of Illinois retired public-school educators. The Association’s members are retired educators, active educators who are near retirement and those supportive of retired educators. They work to serve the interests of retired educators through advocacy, education, cooperation, and socialization.

-----No candidates were endorsed from the 107th House District or the 54th Senate District-----

Illinois voters will be asked to vote on Amendment 1, the Illinois Right to Collective Bargaining Measure. It’s the only statewide referendum this election, and it will appear on the ballot as a Proposed Amendment to the 1970 Illinois Constitution. You may vote on this Amendment on November 8th or sooner if you choose to take advantage of early voting. **Illinois Retired Teachers Association will not be taking a position on this amendment.**

If passed the proposed amendment in no way would open the constitution for consideration of any additional subject matters, including healthcare or pension protections. This amendment would also not allow for the taxing of retirement income.

Illinois Retired Teachers Association encourages you to vote whichever way you feel comfortable, just please make sure to get out there and vote, every vote counts!



Special Presentation with Edward Siedle, author of *Who Stole my Pension*

November 17, 2022 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM central time

<https://ambabenefits.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJMvceuvqz0uH9EBrM6mJjoMRPhusl4M6gZ7>

Edward “Ted” Siedle, is a former attorney with the United States Securities and Exchange Commission and America’s leading expert in pension looting. He has spent more than three decades forensically investigating over \$1 trillion in retirement plans. In 2018 Ted secured the largest CFTC whistleblower award in history – \$30 million, and in 2017 the largest SEC whistleblower award – \$48 million.

He was named as one of the 40 most influential people in the U.S. pension debate by Institutional Investor magazine for 2014 and 2015. Edward Siedle is the authority on DB (defined benefit) pensions for teachers, firefighters, police officers and those in public service and the military.





At the September SCRTA meeting when we discussed changes in TRAIL health insurance, CMS had not yet issued a decision on changes for 2023. By now you should have received letters and emails from both IRTA and CMS detailing these changes. The following is from a 9/20/22 email from Jim Bachman of IRTA:

Central Management Services (CMS) indicated that the current Medicare Advantage Plan (MAPD) contract with United Healthcare is set to expire on December 31, 2022.

During this process, CMS chose to end the State's relationship with United and chose Aetna to become the new, sole MAPD provider. Just like United Healthcare's MAPD plan, Aetna's plan will not include vision or dental. In addition, during this process, CMS chose to no longer provide an HMO option.

Under the new contract, premiums will decrease, while out-of-pocket maximums and deductibles will stay the same. Some aspects of the program may also change such as which drugs are formulary and which doctors are considered in network. Members should discuss these changes with their healthcare team to understand how if at all, these changes could affect them.

So beginning January 1, 2023 **the new sole medical and prescription drug plan, Aetna Medicare Advantage Prescription Drug (MAPD) PPO Plan**, will replace your current one - whether you're currently enrolled in the UnitedHealthcare MAPD Plan, or a Health Alliance, Aetna, or Humana HMO plan. With this new Aetna plan you won't pay a copay when receiving health care services, you won't need to choose a primary care provider (PCP) during enrollment, you won't need a referral to see a specialist, you will receive additional supplemental benefits, and the maximum amount you could spend out of pocket will be less.

The Open Enrollment Period will run from November 1 to November 30. No action is required unless you want to add or drop a dependent or you want to opt out of the program entirely. If you do wish to make changes or opt out, contact My Benefits Service Center at 1-844-251-1777 from 8am – 6pm CT or visit [MyBenefits.illinois.gov](https://mybenefits.illinois.gov) during the enrollment period.

Watch the mail for your Aetna Welcome Kit, which will contain your new member ID card.

If you have opted for **dental or vision insurance**, those carriers will remain the same.

To help members understand the program, CMS is offering virtual **webinars** beginning October 25-27. Links are on the CMS website (<http://cms.illinois.gov/thetrail>). After that, **live seminars** will take place in November, with the closest being 11/9 in Springfield, 11/15 in Effingham, and 11/15 & 11/16 in Champaign. To RSVP, visit <https://sfsxt.aetna.com/OEP/Registration?pageName=Index&ContentId=Mzg=&isPreview=Tg==> or call 1-855-223-4807. See the CMS website for exact times and places.

Also helpful are articles and FAQ's on these **websites** along with **toll-free numbers** where real people can answer your questions.

- Beginning November 1, 2022, you can go to [MyBenefits.illinois.gov](https://mybenefits.illinois.gov) to learn more about your new plan. Phone 1-844-251-1777.
- To learn more about this change, click here. <https://cms.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/cms/benefits/trail/documents/2022/TRAIL%20Participant%20Letter.pdf>
- The CMS site is <http://cms.illinois.gov/thetrail>
- To learn more about plan benefits, find providers, and look up prescription drugs, contact Aetna at 1-855-223-4807 from 8am to 8pm CT or visit https://illinois.aetnamedicare.com/?cid=off-all_4262.